

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR IMMEDIATE

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FOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY SALLY SHELTON

CORRECTED COPY (MRN 119063 VICE 115063)

FOLLOWING REPEAT MANAGUA 02058 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO
GUATEMALA SAN JOSE SAN SALVADOR TEGUCIGALPA MAY 4, 1978.

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, SHUM, NU
SUBJECT: OPPOSITION ATTITUDES TOWARDS DIALOGUE

REF: (A) MANAGUA 1939, (B) STATE 58395

SUMMARY: DURING RECENT WEEKS THE EMB HAS NOTED UNDERCURRENTS OF
CHANGE IN OPPOSITION ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE POSSIBILITY OF A DIA-
LOGUE WITH SOMOZA OR WITH THE LIBERAL PARTY. THERE IS GROWING CONCERN

ESPECIALLY AMONG PRIVATE SECTOR OPPOSITIONISTS, BUT ALSO AMONG OPPO-
SITION POLITICANS, THAT LEFTISTS ARE GAINING ENOUGH MOMENTUM AND
INVOLVING SO MANY PEOPLE IN PROTESTS, CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE, AND ACTS
OF VIOLENCE THAT THE SITUATION MIGHT BECOME UNCONTROLLABLE. THIS
CONCERN NOT ONLY HAS FOUND EXPRESSION IN DIRECT AND SUBTLE SUGGES-

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TIONS THAT THE U.S. SHOULD INTERVENE IN SOME FORM, BUT ALSO IN
SOME SOUL SEARCHING ABOUT A NICARAGUAN SOLUTION. END SUMMARY

1. DURING RECENT WEEKS CONTACTS BY AMB AND OTHER EMBOFFS WITH THE
LEADERS AND OTHER MILITANTS OF OPPOSITION PRIVATE SECTOR GROUPS
AND POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE INDICATED THAT THESE OPPOSITIONISTS ARE
PRIVATELY RETHINKING THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARDS SOME FORM OF DIALOGUE

WITH SOMOZA. THE PRIMARY MOTIVATION FOR THIS CHANGE APPEARS TO BE CONCERN THAT THE FSLN AND LEFTISTS IN GENERAL ARE INCREASINGLY MOBILIZING WORKERS, STUDENTS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC IN ANTI-REGIME DEMONSTRATIONS, AND THAT THEY (THE DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION) MAY BE LOSING THEIR ABILITY TO INFLUENCE FUTURE EVENTS UNLESS THEY ASSERT SOME LEADERSHIP NOW.

2. THE AMB HAS BEEN APPROACHED RECENTLY BY VARIOUS INDIVIDUALS REPRESENTING DIFFERENT OPPOSITION GROUPS SEEKING U.S. INVOLVEMENT IF THEY UNDERTAKE TO MOVE AWAY FROM THEIR CURRENT PUBLIC POSITION OF INTRANSIGENCE TOWARDS A DIALOGUE WITH SOMOZA (REF A). THE MOST RECENT CONTACTS HAVE COME FROM PRIVATE SECTOR OPPOSITIONISTS. THE AMB HAS BEEN INFORMED OF A MEETING SCHEDULED FOR MAY 4 OF THE CHAMBERS OF INDUSTRY, COMMERCE AND CONSTRUCTION AND THE POLITICAL MOVEMENTS OF UDEL AND THE NEWLY FORMED DEMOCRATIC MOEMENT (MDN). THEY ARE PLANNING TO DISCUSS WHETHER AND HOW TO ENTER INTO CONTACT WITH SOMOZA. ONE SUGGESTION WHICH WILL APPARENTLY BE MADE IS TO INVOLVE THE PAPAL NUNCIO, THE U.S. AMB AND AT LEAST TWO OF HIS COLLEAGUES FROM OTHER IMPORTANT EMBASSIES. THE AMB HAS INDICATED THE U.S. CANNOT BE DRAWN INTO A MESSENGER, MEDIATOR, OR GUARANTOR ROLE. HOWEVER, THE AMB INDICATED HE COULD RAISE WITH THE DEPT. THE POSSIBILITY OF BECOMING INVOLVED, WITH OTHERS, IN A MODERATOR ROLE. EMB WILL REPORT SUCH A REQUEST WHEN, AND IF, IT IS RECEIVED.

3. EMB HAS SEPARATELY BEEN INFORMED OF VARIOUS INITIATIVES AMONG THE SEVERAL Factions OF THE TRADITIONAL OPPOSITION CONSERVATIVE PARTY TO CONFIDENTIAL

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DRAW TOGETHER AGAIN TO PRESENT A MORE Viable POLITICAL FORCE FOR ENTERING INTO POLITICAL BARGAINING WITH THE GON. THERE ARE ONLY LIMITED INDICATIONS OF PROGRESS ON THIS FRONT TO DATE. THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE POSITION OF THE OFFICIAL CONSERVATIVES (PCN) REMAINS THAT OF "NO DIALOGUE WITH SOMOZA." HOWEVER, THERE IS A MUCLEUS OF DISSIDENTS WITHIN THE PCN WHICH IS OUTSPOKENLY CRITICAL OF THIS POSITION. IN THE LAST SESSION OF THE CONGRESS, WHICH WASY STUDYING THE PROPOSED PARTIAL AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION TO PERMIT ELECTORAL REFORM, THE PCN AGAIN BOYCOTTED THE SESSION; BUT ONE DEPUTY, JULIO MOLINA, REMAINED IN THE SESSION TO CRITICIZE THE PROPOSAL AND CALL FOR SUSPENDED ACTION ON THE INITIATIVES. MOLINA PROPOSED THAT ALL POLITICALLY ACTIVE GROUPS, INCLUDING THE FSLN, BE INVITED BY THE CONGRESS TO DISCUSS A BROADER CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM WHICH WOULD DEAL WITH THE FULL RANGE OF OPPOSITION DEMANDS BEFORE FURTHER ACTION BE TAKEN ON THE PENDING PROPSAL. THIS MOTION, A FORM OF CALL FOR A DIALOGUE, WAS NOT ACCEPTED, BUT IT DEMONSTRATES FURTHER INCONFORMITY WITH AN INCALCITRANT OPPOSITION POSITION.

4. IN A MEETING ON MAY 2 OF AMB AND POLOFF WITH BANCO NICARAGUENSE PRESIDENT MONTEALEGRE, HE ACCEPTED THE IDEA THAT SOME NEGOTIATION WITH SOMOZA IS NECESSARY. BUT HE WONDERED WHY SOMOZA COULDNT PREPARE THE PROPER CLIMATE BY DECLARING AN AMNESTY FOR FSLN PRISONERS

AND SUPPORTERS OUTSIDE NICARAGUA SUCH AS "THE TWELVA", AS WELL AS ABOLISHING THE RADIO AND TV CODE. AMB REPLIED THAT THESE WERE POINTS WHICH SHOULD BE PRESENTED TO SOMOZA BY THE OPPOSITION. MONTEALGRE SAID HE DIDN'T SEE WHO COULD TAKE THE LEADE TOWARD INITIATING TACTS WITH SOMOZA, BUT SAID HE WOULD REFLECT ON THIS PROBLEM.

5. COMMENT: THE ABOVE AND NUMEROUS OTHER SIMILAR CONVERSATIONS INDICATE THAT ON A PRIVATE AND PHILOSOPHICAL LEVEL SOME POLITICAL OPPOSITIONISTS AND MOST PRIVATE SECTOR OPPOSITION LEADERS ACCEPT THE LOGIC OF SOME FORM OF A DIALOGUE PROGRESS. TO DATE, HOWEVER, THE READINESS OF ANY GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS TO TRY TO TRANSLATE SUCH PHILOSOPHICAL ACCEPTANCE INTO CONCRETE INITIATIVES HAS BEEN MINIMAL.

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